

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PARADE OF EMPTY STROLLERS
Awareness of a CAS Charter Challenge**

Date: Wednesday October 19, 2011

Time: 12:00 Noon – 3pm

Location: Parliament Hill (Near Eternal Flame) to proceed down Elgin to Police Stn.

Contacts: Jane Scharf (613) 884-9065, Sophie "X" (613) 859-6373, Katherine "X" (613) 618-6654
John Dunn (613) 709-3866

Interviews and Photo's Welcome

Approximately 40-60 child activists and advocates are expected from across the province to join Sophie "X" during her protest parade with empty-baby strollers in support of her court-filed Charter challenge which seeks to determine the constitutionality of certain sections of child-protection legislation which affords Children's Aid Societies (CAS) police powers.

If her Charter challenge is successful, it could change child-protection legislation across the country, in addition to the policies and practices of police and the legal community.

The participants will gather near the "Eternal Flame" in front of Parliament Hill at noon -- with empty baby-strollers -- before setting off down Elgin Street, past the Family Court, and down to their final destination, the Elgin Street Police Station where protesters will express their demand for properly trained police to conduct criminal investigations when child abuse or neglect is alleged against them as opposed to unregistered and unqualified CAS staff conducting such investigations.

Elgin St. will be closed for ½ hour while the group is in transit.

Sophie X's challenge basically says that the province has given the CAS policing powers but under the Constitution the province does not have the authority to pass these laws. The exclusive jurisdiction for policing laws lies with the Federal Government under section 91(27) of the Constitution of Canada. In common terms the Criminal Code of Canada (CCC). Therefore, these unconstitutional laws that give CAS power to police need to be struck down.

Sophie's notice of Constitutional Question:

<http://www.archive.org/details/SophiesChallenge>

All the necessary laws to protect children are in the CCC at the link below:

<http://www.archive.org/details/CriminalCodeLawsProtectingChildren&reCache=1>

The group wants policing done by police who are trained to do the job and have no vested interest in apprehending children except where there is real danger.

Jane Scharf, Canadian Council on Child Protection says, "There is a huge conflict of interest happening here because the CAS are the ones who get funding when a child is apprehended by them so they have a financial incentive to make apprehensions and they operate with impunity because there is no oversight of their actions. They get \$240

per day per child and more if the child has or is labelled with disabilities. In addition, they get \$20,000 when they place the child for adoption"

Sophie "X" wants the public to know, "I will never give up on my kids. CAS took them from me in the hospital and I did not harm or neglect my children or any other children. And I had a very unfair trial. They took my babies for no reasons. They did a risk assessment on me and made predictions that I will hurt or neglect my child simply because I am young, poor, and was in children's aid myself when I was young. This is not fair and my challenge says this is not even legal."

Catherine X wants the public to know, "My child was apprehended by the CAS after receiving false allegations of child abuse. The CAS worker told me I had to be investigated by police before my child can be returned to me. I met with a specialized detective from the child abuse unit who after conducting a thorough investigation of all the facts stated that he strongly believed that I did not harm my child and concluded the investigation without laying charges. After that I asked the CAS worker when my child would be returned to me and her answer was, "We don't consider what the police think as we (CAS) conducted our own 'parallel investigation' and we believe you did harm your child." This CAS worker was not trained in social work, was not certified by the College of Social Work and is not trained to conduct criminal investigations. Yet on the basis of her investigation my child was kept from me for one and half years. She is now a very troubled teenager. This apprehension of my child devastated her and myself as well." (foster care outcomes: <http://www.archive.org/details/CasOutcomes>)

John Dunn, former foster child, director of the Foster Care Council of Canada says, "Just imagine how out-of-control CAS are that these parents are publicly asking for allegations of child abuse or neglect against them and others to be dealt with under the Criminal Code instead of under the current child protection legislation. Having child abuse and neglect investigations done properly by trained investigators (police) under the existing Criminal Code provisions would protect all parties' Charter protected rights throughout the court proceedings, including the rights of the children involved. I'm aware of Children's Aid Societies in Ontario and similar agencies across the country defying child protection court orders for access to families for children in care. The Ottawa CAS instructed the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) to defy a court order which would have allowed Sophie to have access to her newborn baby at the hospital. Children are being taken from their families and put in foster homes, group homes, or adopted out when they were never abused or neglected by their parents in the first place. Charter violations like these happen on a regular basis. This Charter challenge if successful, could protect children's rights to their families where appropriate." (<http://www.afterfostercare.ca>)

Note: The reason for using "X" to replace certain last names is due to current child protection legislation which prevents publication of information which has the effect of identifying a foster child, their parents, or foster parents under threat of prosecution by a CAS. (**ss. 45 (8) Child and Family Services Act** and **ss. 85 (3)**).